The Ladder

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American Sexual Tragedy

THE AMERICAN SEXUAL TRAGEDY
by Albert Ellis, Ph.D.
Twayne Publishers, New York, 1954
288 pp: Bibliography: Index ($4.50)

As a study of present day American attitudes towards sex, love, marriage and family relations, THE AMERICAN SEXUAL TRAGEDY by Albert Ellis, Ph.D., cannot help but be of interest to both heterophiles and homophiles wishing to keep an open mind on all subjects pertaining to human behavior patterns and their causes, particularly that of Americans. It should be most illuminating to us as homophiles, especially in the light of our own defiant social and sexual attitudes. It will become increasingly clear as the reader absorbs Dr. Ellis' erudite treatise that we conform to present social attitudes and mores much more than we perhaps realize. Our inbred beliefs and customs have sources which are buried so far back in the

beginnings of our racial cultures that we cannot help but conform to them in spite of ourselves.

However, valuable as Dr. Ellis' commentary on American behavior patterns is, it is to be felt that he is at least partly in error in his assumption that the mass media comprising certain popular newspapers, magazines, books, motion pictures, radio and TV performances, must of necessity be faithful registers of the general American attitudes of sex, love and marriage.

As anyone knows who has ever submitted material to the popular publications covered in Dr. Ellis' survey, any inclusion of subject matter treated with anything approaching an enlightened concept is frowned upon by editor, publisher and advertiser, who are really the purveyors of American attitudes and mores as reflected in the popular press. It is, in this reviewer's opinion at least, the advertiser in particular who is determined that the great American dream continue to be one of socio-economic innocence and propriety.

If, for instance, the American Bride and Groom (or heaven forbid, an unmarried couple, because where, then, would the immense wedding revenues come from?) embark upon life together embracing the ideal that class, money and family position are secondary to intellectual and cultural values, it would follow that the manufacturers of pink refrigerators, maple diningroom sets and wall-to-wall carpeting would lose money. This, in a predominately material culture like America, is unthinkable.

The best way to circumvent this loss of revenue, then, is to keep American women busy with kitchen, children and church; and the best way to do this is to see to it that she receives no enlightenment of a truly intellectual nature through popular communications levels. Therefore editors publish the same impossible pap year after year because the American woman is too spineless to insist on material less insulting to her intelligence.

The American writer, poor soul, if he is forced to sell articles or stories to the popular media because he likes

to eat three meals a day, will tell you himself or herself that if he is to be at all successful he must learn, painfully at times, that editors and publishers will buy nothing that smacks of individual intellectual stimulation. The writer must copy verbatim the old worn formulas which editors have learned are safe and which advertisers can understand.

This reviewer does not believe that Dr. Ellis is so naive as to think that American writers either as a class or singly are stupid enough to endorse the drivel that they are unfortunately forced by financial exigency to turn out for the popular press.

Aside from the author's rather limited view of the reasons behind-the-scenes for the low quality of American publications, Dr. Ellis gives us much room for thought by his unbiased review of the development of American mores. After reading his appraisal of the basic need of American women for conforming to our present society's ideals of beauty and dress, we can easily see why so many of us have entirely unnecessary complexes about our appearance. Too, his dissertation on the grim courtship conflicts in our society and the accompanying sex blockings acquired from them is an indictment of our accepted social rituals and our courtship-marital philosophies, showing them to be the proven reasons for many of our emotional ills today.

The chapter on "The Folklore of Marital Relations--The Great Coital Myth" should be required reading for everyone, male or female, over the age of 15, and particularly for couples contemplating marriage. This chapter, besides being a veritable eye-opener as far as heterosexual relations are concerned, also has special reference to homosexual behavior.

A particularly important passage states: "Although as great a psychologist as Sigmund Freud made a serious mistake by trying to distinguish between 'neurotic' behavior and sexually deviated or 'perverted' behavior, it has become clear in recent years that the two are actually the same, and that sexual deviants are actually

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ADVENTURE

A Story by Stephenie Barton

Candlelight and Stravinsky! Jane remembered it too well. Were the candles to express Myrt's psyche, or to hide the middle-aged folds on her neck? And the thump of "Le Sacre du Printemps" seemed a paradox to her smooth sophistication of manner. Nevertheless, she was elegant that night - slim, dark and tailored. She was speaking:

"Yes, I find him very poetic, but not at all realistic. Listen to this:

> 'When love beckons to you, follow him, though his ways are hard and steep . . . And when he speaks to you believe in him.'

"A long time ago I believed in the 'Prophet' too, until I discovered one day that the wicked are rewarded and the good are punished, and the world goes around just the same. No, life isn't like a Dickens' novel - there's really no plan, no destiny - just me, and you and chance!"

"You mean," Joy said, "it's a cool world, and you've just got to play it cool to live in it?"

"Well, that's a blunt statement, but you're right. There's no logical reason to believe or disbelieve in anything; even the most basic premises are unprovable. So what is there left?"

"What?" blurted Jane.

"Yourself!"

They finished their coffee, and the hour was late. Jane and Joy left the apartment and hurried home.

II

Home! There were no candles, only baseball mitts and bats strewn hodge-podge over the divan. Jane picked up the bat

and caressed it tenderly.

"This, I believe in! I'll believe in anything I darn please - proof or no proof!"

"Even me?" ventured Joy.

"I would, if you'd let me. Oh, hon--"

"Brother! You're too sentimental. Now take Myrt, you know -'

"Yes, I know. Very precise, analytical. She reminds me of a chemist who'd dissolve masterworks in vitriol to see what they're composed of. I don't know that she's even capable of loving herself."

"Yes, but she's fascinating -."

Joy floated out of the room, and came back with more coffee.

"Jane, you've got to see things her way. If you don't, you'll sure get hurt in this life."

"But why should I? Must I probe with a cynic's scalpel to find if a picture's pretty? All I know is that I love, and hope to be loved, and find it very beautiful. And that's all I want to know."

"Jane, honey, you're such a child. I feel sorry."

III

Home, and an empty home at that. Jane walked in, swinging the bat listlessly. Even practice was poor surcease for a deserted household. She remembered the last discussion at Myrt's, the night she returned alone to the house.

"'Life is a dome of many colored glass - a quest for the exotic, the strange, and variety! Must we thrive on rhinestones when there are emeralds, rubies, and diamonds? The home grows dull when there are so many other ports of call. Ah, you must seek life and embrace it, for its many-faceted views'. If you have faith, then be faithful to love, not the lover --"

"Oh rot!" mumbled Jane, "what book's she been reading now?"

Jane spoke loudly, "Excuse me, I'm sick. You know, too much tripe's bad for the digestion. Coming Joy?"

"No, Jane, I'm staying a while. Goodnight, honey."

IV

Weeks and weeks in an empty house, and Jane waited for the sound of footfalls on the driveway, the creak of an opening door. The summer passed into autumn and the rains. At night the rain spoke to her on the rooftops and peered thin-fingered on the panes. Perhaps Myrt was right, that one shouldn't be confined to one love, or one world. Perhaps, however, Joy was on an adventure with nothingness - as a tree bereft of leaves. For what is the dry husk of maize once the green leaves are gone and the sweet grain dried away? And what are sentiment and beauty without their own excuse for being?

In the dark rain she doubted; by morning she wondered. She knew in her heart that sometime, before the spring, there would be a light tapping on the door, and a call. But also there might be a sadder Joy, and a very cynical Jane.

ANOTHER FIRST!

Volume I, Number 1 of the Denver Area Mattachine Newsletter was issued this month. Though the group is admittedly small in number, its program and first efforts at publication are impressive. Scheduled for August is a discussion meeting on "The Need for a Permanent Relationship", and a Mountain Steak Fry.

Anyone interested in the activities of this group should contact the Mattachine Society, P.O. Box 7035, Capitol Hill Station, Denver 6, Colorado.

Subscription to the Denver Newsletter is $1.00 per year.

One Institute - A SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

For the past 18 weeks I have been attending ONE's new survey course which goes by the jaw-breaking title of "An Introduction to Homophile Studies." It is indeed, just that. In 36 hours we took a whirlwind, but profitable, view of: (hold your breath) - anthropology, sociology, history, biology, psychology, literature, religion, law and philosophy as they pertain to the homophile. (Homophile - that's a fancy term for a homosexual who is concerned with more in this life than just sex. Besides, it's easier to say.)

The survey course is prerequisite to all courses to follow. Starting this fall, Sept. 10, the course will be repeated, but will be lengthened to 36 weeks to provide time for class discussion and quizzes. For those who have taken the survey, or who wish to take it concurrently, there will be given: "The Homophile in History," which starts Sept. 5, and the following semester, Spring '58, "Psychological Theories of Homosexuality." I intend to take both. The fee is nominal; the intellectual rewards are great. Nowhere else in the country can the homophile find this particular integrated approach to his problem. The program welcomes not only interested homophiles, but all those who seek understanding and knowledge on the subject.

The instructors (four of them) are eager people. Some of them have imposing degrees from the schools of higher learning; all have imposing degrees from the school of life; all are dedicated to this endeavor.

However, the <u>best</u> introduction to ONE's educational program in general and the survey course in particular is to be found in the "Preface" to the survey course put out by the Education Division for the purpose of orienting the new student. It follows:

"The study of socio-sexual questions, and in parti-

cular homosexuality, has for long been confronted with formidable difficulties. The academic world either has not been aware that serious omissions exist throughout almost the entire range of its own subject matter, or else has deliberately veiled such considerations as being unworthy of scholarly notice. As a result, only the most fragmentary and disconnected patches of information concerning the homophile can be discovered.

"So far as is known, no educational institution has ever devoted itself entirely, or largely, to the question of homosexuality. In the philosophical speculations on the subject in Plato's Academy, of which the Symposium is but one of the writings left to us, evidence is given of Greek concern with the topic.

"During later centuries, a church council here and there has debated the theology involved, or a legislative body may have appointed its study commissions. In the early years of this century we had in Berlin Magnus Hirschfeld's 'Institut', a massive enterprise devoted exclusively to medical and psychological investigation of sex questions in general, with heavy emphasis on homosexuality. Dr. Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research has of course dealt considerably with the field.

"However, all of these approaches have been fragmentary, whether philosophical, religious, scientific, or legal. Not one of them has taken the comprehensive view, which is the very essence of a universal (or university) attitude. It is this attitude which characterizes ONE's approach to the homophile question.

"As stipulated in our Articles of Incorporation, the primary purposes of ONE, Inc., are to publish and disseminate a magazine and to otherwise aid the sexual variant. One of the stated general purposes is 'to sponsor, supervise and conduct educational programs,' etc. From the beginning, the directors of ONE have had this aim clearly in mind, although our public has tended to identify ONE, Inc., entirely with the magazine, ONE. The directors have consistently felt that ONE, to accomplish its purposes, must be more than just a magazine. Our first tentative starts toward 'sponsoring, supervising and conducting educational programs' were the Midwinter

Institutes, held in 1955, 1956 and 1957.

"In the 1956 Midwinter Institute program was the announcement that the year would see a fully-launched program for ONE's Division of Education. During the summer a planning committee of four, appointed by the Corporation for the purpose, met to work out plans for the fall opening of ONE INSTITUTE as an adult education facility.

"Their final report, as adopted by the Corporation, called for several 'popular' undergraduate courses, such as: 'A General Introduction to Homophile Studies,' (prerequisite to all other courses in the Institute); 'The Homophile in History'; 'A Survey of Psychological Attitudes on Homosexuality'; 'Homophile Literature and Writers'; 'The Sociology of Homosexuality'; 'The Homosexual and the Arts'; and 'Religion, Philosophy and the Homophile'.

"In addition to these 'popular' courses the Institute will offer professional training on undergraduate and graduate levels for those wishing to become scholars in the field. Specialists will be trained in the various periods of history in which the homophile has played an important part. Writers intending to treat homosexuality will be trained in sound methodology for either fictional or non-fictional handling of the subject. Considerable emphasis will be laid on the training of sociological specialists competent to deal with this much-neglected approach. Therapists and counsellors will be given suitable preparation in the psychology of homosexuality, for the responsible treatment of maladjusted individuals.

"At a later date it is hoped there may be added a department of courses for self-expression in music and the arts, where the homophile may cultivate his talents and ability in a non-repressive atmosphere. This department is also expected to serve importantly in the therapy and rehabilitation of those needing such assistance.

"We are convinced after much observation of even the best-intended efforts of other institutions that the general university perhaps never can or will do the job, and that a specialized Institute is as necessary in

this field as in any other difficult and highly technical area of learning.

"We are convinced that as ONE INSTITUTE carefully and soundly expands its work, by training experts, by offering the general public reliable information, and by setting up standards in a field so sadly without them today, that much good can be accomplished.

"It is the purpose of ONE INSTITUTE to conduct systematic and serious examinations in three important phases: (1) The collection, tabulation and careful compilation of what has already been written about homosexuality by scholars and literary figures; (2) The critical analysis of these findings, with a view to extending knowledge of the subject and discovering new facts, from which may eventually come the development of a comprehensive theoretical system and practice; and (3) Independent study and research by the Institute's staff, as new contributions in the field.

> "In an area so relatively unexplored and new as this, predictions are difficult, but it is hoped that these studies may result in a stronger and more stabilized philosophical outlook, leading to improved social adjustments for the homophile himself, as well as a reduction of uninformed judgments and irrational attitudes on the part of the general public.

"Examination will be made of several of the sciences, social sciences, the arts and literature, to discover what they have to contribute to the study of homosexuality and the homophile. An attempt will be made to find in what respects these various approaches have been successful, and where they have fallen short. The questions each might properly answer will be asked. Naturally the pursuit of detailed inquiries cannot be attempted in such a survey course. These must be left for more specialized studies.

"In accordance with this approach, the present survey will in general follow the procedure of: (1) Giving a brief outline of the subject under discussion, i.e.,

sociology, anthropology, etc.; (2) Focusing the subject of our study on those aspects of the subject which may particularly be concerned with homosexuality, or which can throw special light upon the question, with a critical examination of what contributions it has made and may be expected to make; (3) Application of the contributions of the particular subject to personal needs and problems of the individual student, to the homophile public and to society as a whole. Bibliographical material in the respective fields will be briefly examined.

"The whole field of homophile studies being so new, it is to be expected that progress may be laborious and demand vigorous efforts on the part of all concerned. As a pioneer educational effort, possible revisions of method may become necessary from time to time. Student suggestions for improvements will be welcomed.

"Because we will grapple with such controversial questions as: causes, cure, social adjustments, personal behavior, ethical standards, prejudices (both in-group and out-group) - it is not to be expected that pat and immediate answers will be easily achieved, if at all. However, we can state without reservations that this, together with the other courses in the Institute, do constitute an educational contribution not to be had elsewhere, and are of unique value.

> "We envision this as developing into a major branch of the Corporation's work. In this Educational Program we offer the American homosexual something he and his kind have never had before; the intelligent means to orient himself, to find his position in relation to the evidences of science, to find his birthright in the cultural heritage of Western society, and to find that necessary philosophy which can lend meaning and satisfaction to life.

"We expect ONE INSTITUTE OF HOMOPHILE STUDIES to develop rapidly into a major agency for helping the homosexual find his place in society - an agency the likes of which has never before existed."

- Sten Russell

Some Remarks on Marriage

Nancy Osbourne has dealt intelligently with one facet of fear with which the married Lesbian must deal; however, she comes to the conclusion (implicit, and unstated) that the Lesbian who keeps her secret from her marriage partner must of necessity deny her own nature. I do not think this necessarily follows.

It occurs to me that the basic aspect of adjustment to such a partnership consists in convincing the partner (after, if necessary, convincing herself truthfully) that her Lesbianism does NOT necessarily consist in an insatiable or an unconquerable desire to engage in relations, either promiscuous or discreet, with members of her own sex, any more than his male nature manifests itself in an insatiable desire to conquer other women.

The married Lesbian who can say to herself, and if necessary to her husband, "I find other women interesting; that does not in any way affect our relationship," is making a mature attempt to accept the nature of the world she has chosen to live in. If she cannot say this truthfully to herself, and, in emergency, to her husband, she had better get a divorce at once.

An aid to this adjustment can occasionally be found in realizing that the Lesbian desire frequently represents a subversion or an alternate channeling of the maternal desire. I am convinced that most Lesbian women who marry do so out of a conscious or unconscious desire to bear children and thus redeem to herself the real or fancied deficiencies in the maternal relationship. While it would not be wise to assume the bearing of a child would automatically right the psychosexual orientation, I feel convinced that many women can, in a sound maternal relationship, resolve their conflicts. One of the primary causes of Lesbianism appears to be a failure - as I say, either real or fancied - in the quality of maternal love. Obviously a woman cannot return to childhood to be brought up more satisfactorily by her own mother. It is equally escapist to seek a mother-and-child relationship to another woman. . . And I would say that of all Lesbian re-

lationships this one is the least realistic. On the other hand, a sound psychological device lies behind the turn-about switch - wherein the woman can, by assuming a sensible maternal relationship with her own child, attain at last a genuine identification with her own mother.

I am not - please observe - recommending marriage and motherhood as cures for Lesbianism. Quite the contrary; I seriously doubt whether any woman who considers herself a Lesbian should marry at all, for whatever reason. But if she has married already, and particularly if she has or plans to have a child, these remarks may help her to accept the situation she has precipitated, and avoid marital discord, disharmony and harm to an innocent child.

I would say, then, that the married Lesbian should start by honestly understanding her own nature. If psychiatric help is beyond her reach, or beyond her means, or if she feels that she is getting along satisfactorily without it, her first step lies in an open and honest admission to herself of what she is; without guilt, without self-pity, but with a clear resolution to see and understand her own position. If she has, or if she desires to have children, this self-understanding is even more imperative.

Which returns us to the original premise; if she and her husband take their marriage vows seriously (and most women live in areas of the country where marriage is still a serious matter and divorce one still more serious), she must be able to put genuine truth in her statement that her interest in other women will affect her marriage no more than the heterosexual woman's healthy interest in other men. Some mixed-up women seem to have the thoroughly untenable notion that indiscretions will, or should, be condoned in a Lesbian which would not be condoned in her heterosexual sister; that a husband should or could be expected to tolerate certain behavior which no husband in his right mind would consider condoning in his wife. For such Lesbians there can be little sympathy; they are claiming, not equality but superior privilege.

If the personality adjustment is suitable, there is no reason why a woman who is, or suspects herself to be,

inherently Lesbian cannot make a happy marriage without in anyway denying her nature. She has no incentive toward misbehavior with men, and if she has no self-pity and no self-excuses, she need not feel deprived of her "true nature", any more than her husband need feel deprived because his emotional outlets have not a promiscuous orientation.

I think - a possibly controversial point - that casual social feminine friendships come more easily to such women. If so, they have a God-given gift for promoting harmony and mutual sympathy in the most ordinary social contacts. The field of feminine personal relations is one field where the Lesbian-oriented woman can contribute much to understanding . . . and one might hint that it is a good place for sublimations . . . to prove at last that women need not be cats with one another. This would be doing all women, not Lesbians only, a service.

- Marion Zimmer Bradley

WHICH ONE HAS THE TONI?

On the August newsstands appear two magazines with articles which purport to describe the female homosexual for the lay reader. The two conceptions are of extreme interest.

According to Hugh Barnes, M.D., in an article entitled "What Makes A Homosexual?" in the magazine, "Actual Medical Cases":

"The homosexual female is characterized by deficient fat in the shoulders and at the girdle, firm muscles, excess hair on the chest, back and legs, a tendency to over-development of the clitoris. There is also a tendency toward a shorter trunk, a contracted pelvis, underdevelopment of the breasts, excess hair on the face and a low-pitched voice."

Edward Dengrove, M.D., offers a slightly different picture in his presentation of "Homosexuality in Women" in the August issue of "Sexology":

"Contrary to the popular conception of the woman with homosexual tendencies, she is not necessarily, or even usually, the extremely masculine woman, aggressive, strong and muscular, mannish in physical appearance and dress, lacking all the delicacy and gentleness we associate with the feminine.

"As a matter of fact, she may be the most feminine of women, and many Lesbians actually accentuate their female charms the better to attract the kind of woman they want as a sexual partner. For most Lesbians are not women who are pretending to be men, but rather women who cannot express their normal sexual drive in relationship to men, but must direct it towards other females instead.

"Even in the sexual sphere, the Lesbian remains essentially feminine, with the natural desires and reactions of a woman. . . .

"There is a small group of Lesbians whose sexual inversion does arise out of their attempt to live the part of a man. These are the Lesbians who dress and behave as much like men as they can, though not all women who do so are homosexual by any means."

IS A HOMOPHILE MARRIAGE POSSIBLE?

"Any permanent relationship between two persons, regardless of their sex, must be a cooperative adventure in growth in order to endure."

This statement keynoted the remarks of Basil Vaerlen, San Francisco psychotherapist, who spoke on "Is A Homophile Marriage Possible?" at the June public discussion meeting sponsored by the Daughters of Bilitis.

Such a cooperative adventure, Mr. Vaerlen stated, is possible - depending upon the intelligence of the two people involved.

He defined intellect as "logic on the level of awareness - 2 x 2 equals 4. Intelligence is the total reaction of the whole organism as a unit (including feelings, emotions, reactions) not tied by the past

or worried about the future - in immediate contact with reality. As human beings our job is to live by intelligence."

Any two people have every right to try, using their basic intelligence, to make a marriage. When such a union fails, Mr. Vaerlen pointed out, it is usually out of the stupidity of the two people involved.

The psychotherapist declared that the major reason why marriages fail is that the two people involved haven't decided intelligently on what they want to do. What also tends to interfere with these partnerships is:

1. Each expects the other to fit into a preconceived ideal and the first rough blow comes when the person tries to be an individual and doesn't fit the ideal.

2. Most people have a preconceived idea of what a marriage should be, based on the concept of marriage which they get from mom and pop.

The foregoing remarks apply equally to homosexual or to heterosexual unions. In a homophile partnership, however, there are additional problems to face - most of which are created by fear. To have a successful union of any type cultural conditioned fears must be discarded, Mr. Vaerlen stated. This is particularly true for the homophile.

"Cooperation in a partnership entails mutually agreed upon compromise. It does <u>not</u> entail competition. Competition may be the life blood of business, but it is the life blow of partnerships.

"Any relationship is a creative process going on now, in present time. Adventure goes hand in hand with this creative process, and growth comes automatically."

The speaker pointed out that in many instances one of the partners will outgrow the other. In such a case there is little use in the two remaining together.

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17. OLIVIA by Olivia. William Sloane Associates, New York, 1949.

A 16-year-old spends a year in a French finishing school near Paris, where she learns more about human relationships than found in her school books. "Olivia" is a poignant story, delicately told, by an older woman looking back on her childhood. It is the story of youth and first awareness.

The French movie, "The Pit of Loneliness", by Colette is actually an adaptation of "Olivia" for the screen.

18. SERAPHITA by Honore de Balzac (1834). Gebbie Publishing Co., 1898.

The variant as saint! Seraphita, an androgynous creature of devastating beauty, wanders alone in a sea of Swedenbourgian mist. As pure and noble as the seraphims she exemplifies, she lives and dies sans love, sans marriage, sans sin.

19. CARMILLA by Sheridan Le Fanu (1872). From "Green Tea and Other Ghost Stories, Arkham House, 1945.

The Lesbian as vampire! A very subtle and spine-tingling mystery, written by a master in that field. It is remarkable for the time it was written, and is not a book to be read alone on a dark night.

20. THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN EYES by Honore de Balzac (1835). Illustrated Editions, 1931.

The Lesbian as conquistadore! A cloak and dagger romance, full of flamboyant action, intrigue and purple rhetoric. The plot is a little absurd, but otherwise delightful reading.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, July 23 - Dr. Carlo Lastrucci, social psychologist from San Francisco State College, will speak on "The Sexual Impulse" at 465 Geary St., Studio 51 (fifth floor), 8:15 p.m. Dr. Lastrucci is an excellent speaker and his original approach to the subject should provide much food for thought and discussion.

Thursday, August 1 - Panel discussion. Another "Battle of the Sexes" between members of the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis. Mattachine monthly meeting, 1830 Sutter St. 8 p.m.

Friday, August 2 - Gab 'n Java session, 2217 Fillmore St., 8 p.m. An informal bull session at present limited to women only.

Saturday, August 10 - Party for members only at 651 Duncan St., 8:30 p.m. $1.50 donation.

Wednesday, August 14 - Monthly business meeting, 2174 California St. (basement apartment). 8 p.m. Members only.

Tuesday, August 27 - Public discussion meeting at 465 Geary St., Studio 51 (5th floor) 8:15 p.m. Robert E. Mack of the Kimball Foundation of Human Engineering will speak on "Proven Methods of Developing Better Human Relationships".

(Continued from page 5)

emotionally disturbed, or 'neurotic', individuals who are fetichistically attached to some particular type of sex activity--and who usually, though not always, became fetichistically attached to this form of behavior because of peculiarities or fixations which arose during their childhood. Sexual neuroses are essentially the same as other forms of neurosis--except that, in our anti-sexual society, we emotionalize them and tend to view them in a special light.

"The psychological criterion of sexual 'abnormality', therefore, becomes that of fetichism or exclusivity. A brief consideration of homosexual behavior may illustrate most clearly. As I have elsewhere pointed out, there is nothing 'abnormal' or 'deviant' about homosexual activity in itself--since the human animal is biologically pluri-sexed, and will (if not arbitrarily hemmed in by his culture) engage spontaneously in monosexual (masturbatory), heterosexual and homosexual acts at different times during his life. Normally, in a sexually restrictive culture like our own, he learns to give up most monosexual and homosexual activity, and to confine himself, especially after marriage, to heterosexual behavior. But the point is that he does so because he learns to be heterosexual, not because he is created so by nature. Even in our own culture, which is violently opposed to homosexuality, Kinsey and his associates have reported that some 37% of all males exhibit homosexual behavior at some time during their lives; and the probability is that the vast majority of all males at some time desire to participate in homosexual activity, but many refrain from doing so out of guilt and fear.

"If, then, a male (or female) in our culture engages in some homosexual behavior, alongside of his more socially acceptable heterosexual activities, we are hardly justified in calling him abnormal from almost any standpoint--since biologically, statistically and psychologically he is behaving in a normal fashion. But suppose this male (or female) becomes mainly or exclusively

homosexual. Then, from a psychological standpoint, there is little doubt that he is fixated, neurotic or abnormal. For unless we believe that homosexuality is inate or inborn in some individuals--which virtually no psychologist who has kept up with the recent literature now believes--it is clear that an exclusive homosexual is neurotically afraid of heterosexuality, or is fearfully fixated on a homosexual level of behavior, or is obsessed with the idea of homosexuality, or is compulsively attached to homosexual activity, or is otherwise neurotically (or perhaps psychotically) attached to his exclusive homosexual activity. If he merely prefers homosexual to heterosexual relations (as a man may prefer blondes to brunettes), that is one thing; but if he simply cannot, under any circumstances, engage in any kind of heterosexual behavior, then he is unquestionably emotionally disturbed, and hence 'abnormal' or 'deviant'.

"Most educated individuals have little difficulty in seeing that exclusive homosexuals in our culture are psychologically disturbed or deviant, but they are loath to admit that heterosexuality, too, can also be neurotic. The fact is, however, that what is scientific sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander, and that exclusive heterosexuality can be just as fetichistic as exclusive homosexuality . . ."

Further chapters on Romantic Love, Weddings, Jealousy and Divorce, to name only a few, in the same manner strip off the layers of false and misleading assumptions created by forces not even suspected by most of us, but affecting all of us. The book ends, after examination of all of the hindrances, sexually and socially, that Americans are up against by stating that ". . .American males and females can rarely surmount the sex differences, antagonisms, and repressions which are so well illustrated in the Kinsey findings. At bottom, the sabotaging of human sex-love relations is a problem which is socially rather than individually created, and which therefore cannot be solved on a broad scale without widespread societal changes in sex attitudes. The American sexual tragedy can be expected to continue its three century long run, and in some respects even to become more tragic, until a pronounced social effort (along with sporadic in-

dividual rebellions) is made to end it. The Kinsey findings unmistakeably point the direction in which we should change our sex attitudes. Dare we take the clearly indicated road to sexual sanity?"

Most certainly the Daughters of Bilitis is a straw in the wind in this direction. And, although some of us will not completely agree with everything the author of THE AMERICAN SEXUAL TRAGEDY has to say, the book is well worth reading if only for the fair and unbiased appraisal he gives all sexual problems. This is a book you should try to convince a person to read whose mind appears to be completely closed to the subject of homosexuality. It may make him or her a little more accepting and open-minded about this problem.

- Jo Allyn

IS A HOMOPHILE MARRIAGE POSSIBLE?

(Continued from page 18)

"The label homophile, or any of its substitutes, is a false delineation. Nothing in research proves that homosexual activity is a specialized aspect of human behavior. Such sexual preference is no more aberrated than any one mode of sexual activity.

"Any marriage is possible between any two people if they want to grow up - and it is nobody's business but their own.

"However, since we live in a culture predominantly heterosexual we must conform to its laws and customs. Because of a basic resentment of this society the homophile tends to exaggerate his mannerisms and to flaunt his sexual preference. Then, he yells because he is 'persecuted'.

"A homophile marriage is not possible unless both partners are willing to recognize the other as an individual and to cooperate together in seeking adventure in living and growth both individually and together."

Readers Respond

ment in particular your L.A. reporter for a good reporting job of the panel discussionheld April 15. I felt that my comments, as well as the other members', were faithfully presented.

"The thought comes to me that I might ask your opinion in the matter of conducting group therapy for female homosexuals. A number of people wish to start a group and I have been asked to become the therapist. Your comments will be appreciated..."

Edward R. Robbins, M.D.
Beverly Hills, Calif.

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"Have just received and read, cover to cover, the June issue of THE LADDER. This is the first copy I have seen since receiving your initial issue last fall. I think you have made real progress since then.

"The article which interested me most in the June issue is "What Mental Health Is Not". Among these items No. 6 seems superfluous. Who would ever suggest that mental health could be 'a lessening of accomplishment and creativity'? No. 9 seems highly debatable to me. 'It is not opposition to religious values'. I do not think that the converse of this statement is necessarily true, 'Opposition to religious values is mental sickness'. I personally rate religious values highly. But I do not be-

lieve that those who do not do so are mentally sick. 'Religious values' covers so much. There are so many religious values, and conflicting ones. There are sound and unsound ones. In some parts of the world cannibalism and ritual murder are based on tribal religious values.

"In the Caribbean Voodoo permeates the life of the people to the point at which religion seems a kind of institutionalized madness. And there remains much that is primitive and unhealthy in even the most advanced religions. Opposition to all that is barbaric and primitive in religion seems quite healthy-minded to me. Sigmund Freud himself was anti-religious and wrote a book to explain why: 'The Future of an Illusion'.

"One of the reasons I am going to keep your June issue is the wonderful quotation from Augustine de Villeblanche submitted by 'J.L.' of Washington. I am greatly indebted to you and to 'J.L.' for that!

"The letter from 'G.K.' of Chicago was, to me, greatly moving. I think it is a great thing to give people the chance to express what is in their minds and hearts as you are doing.

"The article which stirred me up mentally the most was

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'One Facet of Fear' by Nancy Osbourne. I wonder if your readers are aware that the great pioneer in sex studies, Havelock Ellis, embarked on his life work for a very personal reason: he discovered after marriage that his wife was a Lesbian. The situation of the married homosexual must, more often than not, be a desperately unhappy one. Perhaps there is a limit to the amount of intelligence one can expect in what is, after all, an emotional relationship. And it is hard to see how there can be harmony between man and wife if one of the partners (either one) must live a life of deception. To find that someone whom you have loved and trusted through the years, with whom you have shared your life, has abused your trust, has used you deceitfully, must be a terribly painful thing, really heartbreaking. And it seems to be asking a lot to expect the deceived partner (of either sex) to handle the situation intelligently.

"I certainly think that a homosexual, whether male or female, who enters marriage with full knowledge of his/her deviation but who has failed to lay the cards on the table before the normal mate, has acted very unwisely and unjustly. I think that the homosexual, male or female, who seduces an up-to-then heterosexual married person can lay little claim to sympathy or respect. But I certainly sympathize with the plight of the spouse who discovers only after marriage an imperious homosexual need. Yet, it is also undeniable that a great many people in this world want to have their cake and eat it too. After all, there is a difference between desire and need. Does the glutton really <u>need</u> the enormous quantities of food he consumes? He thinks he does, certainly, but as a matter of fact he would be a lot healthier if less self-indulgent.

"After all, nobody is forced to take the marriage vows. It is a purely voluntary act. And Lord knows plenty of heterosexuals fail to take their own voluntary vows seriously. All the same, it is a mystery to me how people can break faith in marriage, can violate what is perhaps life's most serious pledge, and still keep their self-respect, much less continue to expect respect from others. This sounds pretty harsh and unsympathetic, I realize. But one can see that when one individual breaks his/her freely given pledge to another individual who loves and trusts him/her a genuine and serious sin has been com-

mitted. In the last analysis the whole structure of civilization rests upon trust, good faith. When that goes everything breaks down.

"To the homosexual toying with the idea of marriage I would say, 'Don't enter into any life-long commitment you aren't darn sure you can fulfill. And once you've given your word abide by it'. To the unmarried homosexual I would say, 'Leave people's marriages alone. Even if they are unhappy ones. Have decency and guts enough to live lonely, if need be, rather than even to risk wrecking a home'."

Luther Allen, Baltimore, Md.

The writer of this letter is well known to readers of THE MATTACHINE REVIEW which recently ran a two-part article by Mr. Allen entitled "Values and Responsibilities" in the February and April issues, 1957. Copies may be obtained at 50¢ each from Mattachine Review, 693 Mission St., Rm. 307, San Francisco 5.

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"My roommate and I are overjoyed after reading two issues of THE LADDER. You seem to be not only earnest but clear-headed and free from the all-too-frequent homosexual guilt feelings which hamper many of us from standing up for what we believe is not only right but in harmony with the highest aspirations of human morality. One thing I wish you would drop, however, is this homophile rather than homosexual fad. I have come to regard this trend (after experience with men's homosexual organizations in New York which failed) to be a beating about the bush and a neurotic attempt to conform and integrate into heterosexuality. I am weary of men and women who have three children and a home in the suburbs who regard themselves as homophiles.

"I have just read Dr. Foster's book and find it an excellent study . . .

"One more word to answer Barbara Stephens' article on transvestism: I consider myself (and my roommate also considers herself) a mild transvestite - that is, we wear

slacks almost always on our off-work hours. We are comfortable in them and we have no problem adjusting to the stares of the passersby. We consider dresses, high heels and stocking holders the most uncomfortable contraptions men have invented to restrict the movements of women so they cannot walk very far, lift many things, or sit with their legs apart in warm weather."

A.C., New York, N. Y.

Regarding the homosexual-homophile word usage, there is more to it than preference of word - there is the matter of repetition and the need for synonyms! Also, new readers may be interested to know that the book referred to above is SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE by Jeannette H. Foster, Vantage Press, New York. - ED.

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"I was taken up by the intriguing subject as to the natural 'rights' for a person to dress and act in a masculine manner. Now withall, I agree as to the practical reasons why one must not overtly show one's masculine tendencies in public. Avoidance of persecution and ridicule, and holding down a job are not the least of these reasons. Yet, the argument does hold some loopholes, theoretically interesting if not practiceable in our still primeaval times.

"1. What scientific basis is there for a society to uphold certain idiosyncrasies of dress and manner and to condemn others? Of all the intellectual rubbish in the history of mankind, none has been more voluminous than the conventions and taboos of dress. And for the awe and superstition and emotionalism attached to such breaches in convention, we're not too far from the age of the nose-ring and filed teeth.

"2. Transvestism is not necessarily coincident with homosexuality. Many transvestites are not homosexuals, and many homosexuals are not transvestites. Moreover, the origins of this complex are as often nonsexual as sexual, coming as they do from security and power motivations, or from faulty education. Cross-dressing may be a neurosis, or might be a natural

tendency, but it certainly is no crime.

"3. A clear-cut distinction should be made between a crime (defined as an injury inflicted against society) and unconventionality. Breaches in convention may appear childish or ridiculous in some cases, but they certainly do not warrant the cruel and unusual punishments that are meted, far out of proportion to the act.

"4. The cult of conformity itself remains to be questioned. The human race may be compared to a giant organ of a million musical stops, each potentially of great beauty. Yet our mores and customs will condemn the personality to such mutilation, changing him from a human being into a 'type', according to race, occupation or sex. Those who depart from the rules are punished for the 'crime' of not behaving like a typical Negro, professional worker or feminine woman. The homosexual world is as guilty as the rest, when they would confer the straitjacket of 'Butchhood' upon its embryo members. Perhaps the time is not ripe to preach autonomy and creative living, for the Barbarian still walks among us as legacy from the past ages. May it be that sometime, in the not too distant future, a fifth freedom shall arise: 'The right to be ourselves!'"

B.S., San Leandro

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"I am much impressed with THE LADDER. It differs from other publications in that it is reportorial of things that you are actually doing. And the doing seems to be of value to your group and to whatever of the general public you can meet. Your programs are apparently well thought out and of great value from a group therapy standpoint. Keep up the good work and count me among your friends."

A.B., San Francisco, Calif.

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